Published on the occasion of the exhibition 
Başakşehir: An Urban Model by Sandra Schäfer
(with collaboration with Ayşe Güder),
16 May – 29 June 2019, at GLASMOOG – Space for Contemporary Art, Academy of Media Arts Cologne.

EDITED BY Helke Andor

GRAPHIC DESIGN Lisa Kleinbergen
ENGLISH COPY-EDITING Kenneth Peterson
TRANSLATION INTO TURKISH AND TURKISH COPY-EDITING
Bahar Ilgen and Bayram Sen
TRANSCRIPTS ART TALK Marie Ilgen
INSTALLATION VIEWS Heidi Pfuhl

tYPEFACES Graphis, Akkurat Mono
PAPER Fy ply specialpleister extraweiß 115 g/m²
PRINTING Spree Druck, Berlin

EDITION 400

© 2019 the artists, the authors, and Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln; for the works of Sandra Schäfer, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2019. All rights reserved.

PUBLISHER AND DISTRIBUTION
Verlag der Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln
Peterwelen-Platz 2 • 50676 Köln • Germany
verlag.ksm.de • http://verlag.ksm.de
ISBN 978-3-942194-41-5

Başakşehir: An Urban Model is a project by mazefilm in collaboration with the Academy of the Arts of the World and GLASMOOG/Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln.

THANKS TO
Jochen Becker, Ekaterina Degot, Amin Farzanehfar, Asma Gholi, Lale Komba, Elke Miller, Aurora Rodono, Martin Schütz

GLASMOOG

Rahm für Kunst & Diskurs • Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln
Filzengarten 2a • 50676 Köln • http://glasmoog.ksm.de
Do/Fr 10-18 Uhr, Sa 14-18 Uhr und nach Vereinbarung • +49/221/28185-293

BAŞAKŞEHİR: AN URBAN MODEL
SANDRA SCHÄFER
with Ayşe Güder
PRODUCING SPACE

CORINNE DISERENS IN CONVERSATION WITH SANDRA SCHAER

SASCH: The filming was also an attempt to see what I actually can do in this space with a camera, having permission to film in the Başakşehir neighborhood, where everything is private. In my research, I try to find out how I can move, how I can film, and who I can approach, who is going to talk to me or not. Recording specific sounds, views, details of everyday urban texture and life is quite complex. I started the production process by going through the rushes and reading the interview many times before I started to select specific scenes, images, and sounds. Slowly, I went through the rushes in Istanbul through shifting and moving around these pieces I started to build a narrative that is able to accommodate with trends in Istanbul without their status of being rushes. In the beginning I wanted this only to be research as a basis for second filming in Başakşehir, but then certain things happened—for example the economic crisis at that point because I was not sure if I could really continue. I had a lot of anger and I thought whether I should go to Istanbul, what I saw there, I was in a very bad mental state at that time. I realized it would be a kind of activist tourism. Instead I joined the protests in Berlin. I did a lot of research for me to understand the moment and thinking that something else is necessary. I decided that I wanted to edit the work, because what is happening right now is related to exactly this urban and political transformation, but also more specifically, thinking out of condition of your production, transmission, reception, which are totally part of the artistic decision.

SASCH: And it is also about a responsibility. I was really questioning the whole work for a while, asking myself what it means in this concrete political context.

AUDIENCE: Did you talk to people from the aesthetic but also from the impression people give us as an atmosphere of hope and of longing, which I experience from many of the statements of the people who were in a limbo between something that they lost and something they’re expecting from the future, and you tried to show us that they may not get what their hope is about and maybe they say it for themselves. What is your idea about Başakşehi? Will nature come back there, or let’s say maybe not, but this space of history? How did you project the space of the former

CD: Do you think this is very much on who the people are, the way they are working on the project, the people around Başakşehir and discussed a lot about political Islam in Iran and Turkey, and how it has changed. Through Ayşe I got to know the working on the project, that the outdoor space is very much related, because it’s closely related to a political shift in Turkey; an aspect one would not find in any other place on an ideal. To quote Hannah Arendt, we should not be in the position of choosing our cohabitants otherwise we will lose the preconditions of our political existence.

AUDIENCE: I’m for example thinking of the person on the bus on its way to Şişhane, who says that he will have to move to the outskirts of the city and have to go further to the country side, to his family, or to Ankara.

SASCH: You talk about a landscape worker who moves around in the landscape behind the camera in Şişhane. The people in Şişhane definitely will lose something, they will lose their home, and they will be removed to faraway places. They need to organize themselves very well, but until now this was not successful, because their individual ownerships differ from zone to zone, there is no one in charge who organizes the people together. And they are in a very weak position in terms of political power, but also economic power. With the whole restructuring processes that already have taken place they probably will be removed. They are very poorly paid. Also they are not the landowners in most cases, which also makes it difficult. The new flats they get that is built in the space apart from them is getting bigger and bigger, they will be displaced from their social environment. I think the landscape gardener describes it very well. For him it’s also the conflict that he doesn’t know what to do against the new flats. Of course he doesn’t like it, because he is now used to life in the city, and he really enjoys it.

CD: I’m going to digress a little about migration and belonging. It is a problem that Turkey near Syria and Iraq borders for a project for the first time approximately ten years ago. Then I went back six years ago, last time I went it’s probably four years ago. I was totally amazed, because the policy and investment planning the government has about the infrastructure development in the country is extremely powerful and fast. Turkey is positioning itself as a political, military, and economic power for the region. Turkey, which used to be a small country with small villages (farmers, animal holders), and towns with very little industry, there is a network of small country roads through the hilly landscape—this is the landscape that Turkey is losing. Strong towns and villages access to these old roads in the hills, it’s an authoritarian and aggressive way of appropriating and controlling the part of the country by breaking down the communities’ resistance.

SASCH: The city really ends with Şişhane. And the informal settlement of Şişhane has been built up over many years, so it’s really grown. It’s very different from how now these huge building blocks are built. The blocks are raised in one year or even two years, and it’s quite different. The people that are from the area, they are not accepted and they are not offered the same possibilities that are offered, but some of course started to accept them, which began to break the resistance among the larger group of inhabitants.

AUDIENCE: Could you please clarify the connection between Başakşehir and Şişhane?

SASCH: Şişhane is an informally built neighbor- hood, which belongs to the district of Başakşehir, but it’s not part of the new town. It’s going to be removed, because it’s near the new Bosporus that Tavşy Erdoğan wants to build.

AUDIENCE: You mentioned earlier a striking moment when the man on the bus asked the driver who is feeling somehow confronted, complaints: “This feels like an interrogation”; and your laconic answer is: “No, we’re just having a conversation.” Did you talk to your interview partners who are you kind of critical? Did they guess it, or were they okay with that?

SASCH: They knew, but at the same time they were proud of what they were doing and the situation in which they live now.

AUDIENCE: Actually you are the foregrounder, you’re coming from outside, how do you feel to have had effect on the answers?

SASCH: It definitely had an effect. My collaborator Hanade Yılmaz and I from the outside, we don’t live in Başakse- hir. Hanide is from Turkey, I am from Germany, and Hanide wears the headscarf. When we work there it is a working feeling because she is differently involved in the subject, but she also has her specific approach. And being two women also played a role. So all this matters, it’s never neutral. Our bodies are political bodies.

The public conversation between Corinne Diserens and Sandra Schafer took place in the context of the exhibition Başakşehir: An Urban Model at GLESMOCO, Cologne, on June 10, 2014.

The art historian and curator Corinne Diserens is director of the Collectiv Art School Erg in Brussels and head of the Jury at Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart. Before, Diserens was director of the Museum in Bozen/Bolzano, the Musée des Augustins in Toulouse, the Musée de Marseille as well as curator at IVA/ Museum, Istanbul. Her current research focus is Centro Julio Gonzalez in Valencia.

Sandra Schafer is a visual artist and filmmaker living in Berlin. In her work she is dealing with the representations of gender, migration and urbanization. Her collaborator for the project Başakşehir: An Urban Model, Aye Gavdar, is a journalist living in Istanbul.